Ford Meets General, Rebukes Him on Speech

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By Michael Getler
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Ford personally rebuked Air Force Gen. George S. Brown at the White House yesterday for comments about Israeli and Jewish influence in the United States. But the President is expected to keep Brown as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There have been angry protests from Jewish organizations, and some members of Congress have called for Brown to resign or be fired as a result of his recently published remarks before a Duke University law school audience on Oct. 10.

But Mr. Ford, in a 10-minute meeting with the general yesterday morning in which the President repeated his dismay over Brown's comments, is also believed to have accepted both Brown's apology and his explanation that his "ill-considered" remarks did not represent his true convictions.

The President is said by sources to want to "close the case" now on the episode.

The 55-year-old, four-star general had an unblemished record in 32 years of military service.

Early yesterday, White House press Secretary Ron Nessen told reporters traveling with the President to Nevada that Mr. Ford had delayed his departure to meet with Brown. Nessen said Mr. Ford was "aware of the public reaction" to Brown's comments and that he would not discourage reporters from categorizing Mr. Ford's statements to the general as a rebuke.

Nessen added that Brown "neither makes nor articulates American foreign policy."

The press secretary also said "I know of no plans for him (Brown) not to continue" in his post, and the general did not offer his resignation.

At the Pentagon, spokesman William Beecher reiterated Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger's view that Brown's comments were unfortunate and regrettable but that Schlesinger retained confidence in Brown. When asked if the episode had put Brown's position in jeopardy, Beecher answered: "We hope not," a response somewhat less certain than Wednesday's answer.

Meanwhile, Peter Kahn, the second-year law student who arranged for Brown's appearance at Duke and who also recorded the presentation (Brown's aide also recorded an earlier press conference and speech that took place before the final question and answer session), issued the following statement on behalf of the Duke Law Forum:

"From the tenor of his remarks during his prepared speech and the rest of the question and answer session, as well as his other statements during the course of his visit here, there is absolutely no indication that Gen. Brown in any way holds anti-semitic views."